

SUBJECT: Confirmation of Asian Citrus Psyllid in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

During the first week of August 2008, APHIS confirmed Asian citrus psyllid (ACP), *Diaphorina citri* Kuwayama, in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The ACP specimens were collected among residential citrus plants.

In response, APHIS is working closely with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the Clemson University Regulatory and Public Service Programs to delimit the extent of infestation by inspecting host plants on residential properties, any commercial citrus groves, as well as nurseries. To date, ACP is confirmed to be present in Baldwin County, Alabama; Glynn, Chatham and McIntosh Counties, Georgia; Hancock County, Mississippi; and Charleston County, South Carolina.

ACP is the primary vector for citrus greening (CG). Citrus greening, also called Huanglongbing or yellow dragon disease, is one of the more serious diseases of citrus. Citrus greening disease is a threat to the U.S. citrus industry and has been found throughout Florida and in Orleans Parish, Louisiana. For additional information on ACP and CG, you can go to the APHIS home page (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/>) and browse by subject under Plant Health.

APHIS along with the Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina state inspectors will be issuing emergency action notifications to all nurseries where ACP is currently found in order to prevent the movement of infested plants. When psyllids are found in nurseries, psyllids and plants are being tested for citrus greening. To date no psyllids or plants have tested positive for citrus greening in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi or South Carolina.

With the confirmation of ACP in four new state records, APHIS is working closely with state regulatory agencies to take appropriate phytosanitary action to prevent the movement of host plants and plant material. We will also continue testing for citrus greening when psyllids are identified.

APHIS will continue to work closely with officials from the states to delimit the presence of both ACP and test for CG, while assessing what other measures need to be taken in response to these new finds. ACP is considered to be present in the U.S. and is subject to official control to limit its spread.

For additional information about these programs, you may contact Patrick Gomes, National Coordinator, Citrus Health Response Program, at Area Code (919) 855-7313.

/s/ Paul R. Eggert /for

Rebecca A. Bech
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine